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ABSTRACT

This paper represents the final report of a regional seminar (Asian countries) on educational alternatives held under the auspices of UNESCO in December 1976. The seminar focused on educatio ral services for children from 5 to 14 years of age and emphasized the needs of children in poverty areas. Limitations and inequities in the current educational systems are discussed. Some of the educational issues considered in the seminar include: the needs of children attending and not attending school; urban-rural differences; socioeccnomic differences; the child's life in and out of the classroom; the relevance of schooling to future needs (as a worker and as part of the community); consideration of the individual's ability, background, and future development; and the role of the parent and community in the educational system. Local organization and supervision are considered necessary for educational relevancy. The report concludes with discussions of various methods, resources, and management considerations for developing and delivering educational services. Suggestions for future actions at the national, international, and regional level are included. (BD)

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Alternative Approaches to School Education at Primary Level

Report of a Regional Seminar in Asia

PS 009478

UNESCO REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EDUCATION IN ASIA
BANGKOK, 1977

Regional Seminar on Alternative Approaches to School Education at Primary Level, Manila, 6-14 December 1976.

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Manila, 6-14 December 1976

FINAL REPORT

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Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia
in co-operation with Department of Education and Culture,
Government of the Republic of Philippines,
and
Unesco National Commission of the Philippines

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PREFACE

Opportunity is taken in this preface to offer a word of explanation about the pictures which appear in the following pages. They were not of course a part of the report adopted by the Seminar but have been included here by the editor because they seem to illustrate rather well the theme which runs powerfully through the deliberations of the Seminar - that children are not tabula rasa; they are endowed with unique experiences on which further learning should take place.

These children are mostly pictured engaged in the activities which we do not have to plan for them. The activities come from informal planning done by their ancestors many centuries ago.

Thus, we see a young foster mother, high in the mountains of Nepal, pictured with 'her' babies, and a slightly older companion. While the physical growth follows the pattern to which we are accustomed, this is no child in the accepted current connotation of the word. She is not dependent, she is depended-upon. She is not sent out to 'play', she is helping to bring up two children. She doesn't go to children's parties, nor does she wander about asking mother "What shall I do now?" Although she may have a vocabulary of 30 words, she knows much of what, in nature's terms, is life.

Overleaf, we see the five-year-old girl who is feeding her brother, perhaps three years younger. She very likely knows 'where babies came from', just as she obviously knows how to care for them. When her school education begins, it should begin at the point she has already reached.

The boys in the palms may be playing - for the moment - but they can also climb those trees, capture the coconuts, and slice them open with a knife so sharp they might almost fell the tree with a stroke if they didn't know how to handle dangerous instruments - but they do. Further along we come across two

Afghan boys in the field with their father. They are not playing at helping father; they are working, and they are helping father.

Still further on, what could be the same young girl bathes her brother. Then we have young merchants, then young carpenters, and so it goes. Some new planning is needed to provide the kind of organized education that we want to give these wordly-wise youngsters.

The final illustrations depict another kind of primary-level learner. These are the parents or the grandparents of the children we have been thinking about. They are adults, and what they receive is adult education - but young and old are in need of literacy and further skills - to do better the things they are already doing. How to provide this instruction, and present it in such a way that the learners can see the benefits quickly and constantly, and try to learn still more, are the essence of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Regional Seminar on Alternative Approaches to School Education at Primary Level was organized in pursuance of Resolution 1.2221 adopted by the General Conference of Unesco at its Eighteenth Session, according to which:

"The Director-General is authorized to pursue or to undertake activities designed to promote the planning and establishment of structures and curricula for education which will make it possible for everyone to continue his education throughout life, in accordance with his aspirations and needs, and in the light of the requirements of the economic, social and cultural development of the community, and of the principles laid down in the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, paying particular attention:

- to the organization of education for age-groups at the pre-school and school stages, aiming at equality in education, at the establishment of complete, flexible and diversified structures combining the features of formal and non-formal education so that they interact with each other; . . ."

The Seminar is one of a series of activities undertaken by Unesco towards promoting reflection on the needs for evolving "complete, flexible and diversified structures", notably aimed at the realization of equality in education. Meetings in this series included the Meeting of Experts on Services to Out-of-School Youth in the Asian Region (Bangkok, 9-13 October 1972), the Regional Seminar on Rural Youth and Out-of-School Education in Asia (Tagaytay, Philippines, 30 September-5 October 1974), and the Regional Seminar on Lifelong Education, the

Curriculum and Basic Learning Needs (Chiangmai, Thailand, June 1976). The theme of "Alternative Approaches to School Education at the Primary Level" was also examined in a Meeting of Experts in Africa (Addis Ababa, 6-10 October 1975).

Convened at the invitation of Unesco, the present Seminar was held at Manila on 6-14 December 1976, with the Government of the Philippines acting as generous host.

Scope

The Seminar's terms of reference required it quite deliberately to focus consideration on educational alternatives for children and young people in the age group 5 to 14 years. This broadly spans the period which begins with the stage conventionally accepted for introducing the child to 'schooling', and the stage when the young adolescent is ready to enter the world of work. In the fast-growing literature on 'non-formal' or 'out-of-school' education, a noticeable feature is an almost exclusive concentration on young people and adults in the age-range 15-25 years, with emphasis on their function as producers. If the educational alternatives for the younger age group have not received quite the same attention in educational policies or in the plethoric growth of 'educational models', it is often because of the implicit belief that, given time and resources, the problem will solve itself when the education systems are able to expand and provide universal primary education.

The Seminar's discussions were intended to bring this implicit belief into the open for scrutiny, in the framework of the Agenda (Annex I).

The title of the Seminar, again quite deliberately, refers to 'school education'. This is intended to draw attention to a range of questions which are concerned with the relationship between schooling and other educational alternatives; questions such as: changes within the schooling system to provide alternatives; educational alternatives outside the schooling system which call for changes in the structure and content of the schooling system itself. Investigation of issues such as these by the Seminar moved to a wider question - education as a continuum

in which the education of children and the education of adults are inseparably interlinked.

Participation

In preparation for the Meeting, Member States participating in the Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), were requested to send in case studies on projects utilizing flexible educational structures combining the features of school and out-of-school education for a variety of learner populations (non-school-enrolled children and youth, enrolled children and youth, children and youth without adequate schooling, and of populations supportive of these learner populations).* Eleven Member States responded and participated in the Seminar. Organizations of the United Nations system and other organizations also sent representatives or observers. (List of Participants at Annex II)

Organization

The Meeting, held in Manila, was inaugurated on the morning of 6 December 1976. After a Welcome Address by Dr. Alfredo T. Morales, Chairman, Education Committee, Unesco National Commission of the Philippines, and a Message from Mr. Raja Roy Singh, Director, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia, the Honorable Juan L. Manuel, Secretary of Education and Culture of the Philippines, delivered a Keynote Address. Secretary Manuel referred to the forces in and outside education which have compelled education to consider innovatory actions in the education system, and outlined a variety of urgent considerations that require attention, arising from rapid demographic changes and from changed socio-economic policies emphasizing social justice and equity. (Address at Annex III)

Following the inaugural, the Seminar assembled in the first plenary session to elect its office bearers who also constituted the Bureau of the Meeting. The following Officers of the Meeting were elected unanimously: Chairman: Dr. Felicita G. Bernardino (Philippines); Vice Chairmen: Mr. Min-tae Lee

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* These reports and short case studies are available on microfiche from the Unesco Regional Office, Bangkok.

(Korea) and Mr. Ganesh Prasad Bhattarai (Nepal); Rapporteurs: Mr. George Mendis (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Tan Teng Wai (Singapore).

The first three plenary sessions were devoted to the presentation and discussion of country case studies by the participants. Thereafter the Seminar formed itself into two Working Groups. The reports of the Working Groups were discussed in plenary session. At the final plenary session held on 14 December, the Seminar considered and adopted the draft Final Report for transmission to Unesco.

Acknowledgement

The Meeting recorded its deep gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, its Department of Education and Culture, and the Philippine National Commission for Unesco for acting as host, and for all courtesies and consideration extended to participants. Appreciation was expressed of the programmes of visits organized by the Philippine National Commission and the Department of Education and Culture. The participants requested that their thanks and appreciation be conveyed also to the Regional Director of Education, Bulacan, and to the teachers and personnel in the projects visited in Bulacan, who helped the participants so generously.

The Seminar recorded its thanks to Unesco for making it possible for the participants to exchange experiences and collectively consider the critical problems of education implicit in the theme of the Seminar, and expressed its appreciation of the efficient organization provided by the Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia.

DESIGNING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

Overview of the problem

"What kind of development?" "By what means?" are questions the answers to which are determined decisively by the overall strategies and policies for economic and social development which each country may have adopted for itself. As far back as 1967 statements like the following began to appear:

> In Asia, as elsewhere, there is unanimous agreement that substantial economic growth is essential to the steady improvement of levels of living; this assumption is a central plank in the underlying philosophy of all national development plans in the region.[1]

> The apparent outcome has been an overall increase of welfare disparities in many Asian countries - between rural and urban areas and between high-income and low-income groups generally and in cities particularly. It scarcely needs to be pointed that this trend represents a contradiction of the basic intent of development planning, at least insofar as that intent is overtly expressed.[2]

In the 1950s and 1960s, the main emphasis of development policies in most of the developing countries in Asia was on developing the 'modern' technological sector and increasing GNP growth rates, statistically visible from one five-year plan to another. International assistance both encouraged and supported this trend, particularly the 'technical assistance' type. It was assumed that the development benefits of accelerated economic growth, principally generated in the modern sector, would 'trickle' down to the mass of the people.

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1. United Nations, *1967 Report on the World Social Situation*. New York 1969. p. 112.

2. *Ibid.* p. 121.

In the education sector, this economic strategy was reflected in an emphasis on those types of education which were supposed to contribute trained manpower to the modern economic sector - secondary and higher education and technical education. Mass education, whether in the form of primary or adult education and literacy, was relegated to lower priority. The results of this policy were reflected towards the latter 1960s and early 1970s, in a declining growth rate of educational facilities for the young and adults. In retrospect, it is unmistakably clear that development policies pre-occupied with GNP growth rates and modelled on industrialized countries, had a deeply distorting effect on one sector more than any other sector; namely, the development and mobilization of human resources - the one resource factor which the developing countries have in abundance, and of which the young group forms a major segment.

National, regional, and international studies have indicated that the traditional poverty-ridden sector benefited little from the anticipated 'trickling down' process of the emphasis on the urban or modern sector. Even high rates of economic growth of relatively high national per-capita incomes (which were national averages) did not necessarily lead to significant progress for the poor 80 per cent of the population, and certainly not for the poorest 30 per cent of the population. In fact in many cases the problems of the poorest of the poor were aggravated rather than eased. Consequently, political instability and social disequilibrium became of serious concern to countries in the region. At the same time, the pursuit of economic growth itself has failed to maintain momentum where it has alienated itself from the aspirations of the mass of people or defaulted in engaging their partici pation.

In the current decade, a significant shift in the national development policies is taking place, with increasing stress on social justice and equity, concretely expressed in policies directed at poverty, deprivation, inequalities and disadvantaged populations such as the rural and urban poor. In this veering away from markedly inegalitarian socio-economic processes of growth which have contradicted fundamental values of human dignity and justice, countries are now searching for new development strategies articulating the social with the economic dimensions.

International and regional collective priority for greater economic justice, and a more equitable distribution of wealth has manifested itself in the Proclamation of the Second Development Decade in the United Nations General Assembly.[3]

It is in this framework of heightened awareness of social justice and principles of equity that educational development too needs to be reviewed and designed: it is in this newly emerging context of development policies derived from an awakening recognition of total development that education policies and problems need to be seen.

In the developing countries in Asia, children and young people in the age group 1-14 years form about 41 per cent of the total population and in the age group 5-14 years around 25 per cent. The developing countries therefore are 'young' countries whose future configuration lies at any moment in the potential of these young groups.

The overall statistical picture of education * would appear to have more bright than dark colours.

For example, between 1950 and 1967, total pupil enrolment rose from 50 million to 140 million. Between 1960 and 1970 primary school enrolment increased by 51% from 82.7 million to 125.0 million. From 1970 to 1974 the enrolment increased by 11% to 138.8 million. Although population increased very significantly, the growth rate of primary school enrolment was still higher.

The rapid expansion of primary education has demanded increase in supportive resources. For example the primary school teaching force increased from two to three million over the 1960-1970 period. In 1974, the number of teachers was 3.5 million, of which 1.3 million were female teachers. The pupil/teacher ratio decreased from 43.1 in 1965 to 39.1 in 1974.

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3. United Nations. *International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade*, 11 November 1970. (A/RES/2626(XXV))

* The statistics in this section, unless otherwise indicated, refer only to countries represented at the Seminar.

The picture, however, even in statistical terms, is not uniformly bright. For example, in some countries in the region, the enrolment ratio is as low as 30%. On average, even in the more educationally developed countries, some 10-20% of school-age children never enter school. In the region as a whole, in 1974, the enrolment ratio at primary level for girls was considerably lower than that for boys. On average, some 40% of girls do not enter school. Wastage in education in the form of repetition of grades and dropping out has remained a continuing feature, especially at the first level. Yet only five of the countries in the region publish repetition data, although repetition is an important element in wastage and has to be taken into account for remedial action. From the data available in four countries in the region, the following table indicates the low level of 'efficiency' of primary education.

Country	Year	Years to produce primary school graduates			
		Boys		Girls	
		Ideal	Actual	Ideal	Actual
1	1972	5	12.15	5	14.03
2	1967	5	9.47	5	12.47
3	1973	6	9.85	(both boys and girls)	
4	1974	7	15.67	7	17.67

The cost of education has of course been rising, and countries in the region are providing between 2-6% of the GNP on public expenditure on education. There are indications that in most countries in the region this investment cannot be increased further.

Despite the statistically impressive increases in enrolment (impressive particularly when read off as national or regional aggregates), there are vast numbers of young people without access to education. In terms of the proportion of out-of-school young people to the in-school population in the age-group 5-14, the percentage has apparently decreased between 1960 and 1974, from about 31% in 1960 to around 22% in 1974 — even though the absolute numbers have actually increased slightly, from around

38 million in 1960 to more than 39 million in 1974. Clearly the expansion of educational opportunities has failed to keep pace with population growth.

In a few countries (and the number of such countries is quite small in Asia) there are not enough schools to serve all areas. In most countries, however, national surveys have shown that children do not enrol although schools are there; or if they enrol, a number of them drop out early. If account were taken of 'learning gains' achieved by being in school, the picture would be substantially darkened even for countries which claim to have universal enrolment for the young age group.

Given the declared national policies to promote more equitable distribution of development benefits, equitable access to education assumes central importance in the overall development process by which human capacities are mobilized and developed to serve the diversified objectives of human endeavour (economic, social and cultural) that provide both the motive power for development and also define the direction of such development. Does the assumption then hold that, given time and resources, the expansion of existing schooling systems will ultimately reach out to every young learner and bring about equitable access to education? This assumption is challenged by a variety of criticisms levelled at the schooling system. These criticisms in their extreme form are such as the following.

1. The schools tend to function more as a 'selecting' mechanism than as learning environment, selecting pupils from grade to grade and from one stage to another. In developing countries in Asia, this selection mechanism becomes apparent even in the very first grade, and the selection process is implicitly or explicitly determined by the requirements of the higher levels of the schooling system rather than by the learners' needs. Furthermore, the selection process is strongly biased socially, and children from poor families or deprived environments, even if they enter school, have far fewer chances to survive the selection process.

2. The school programmes take into account only a narrow range of learning needs, concerning themselves almost exclusively with the development of certain cognitive skills. The present

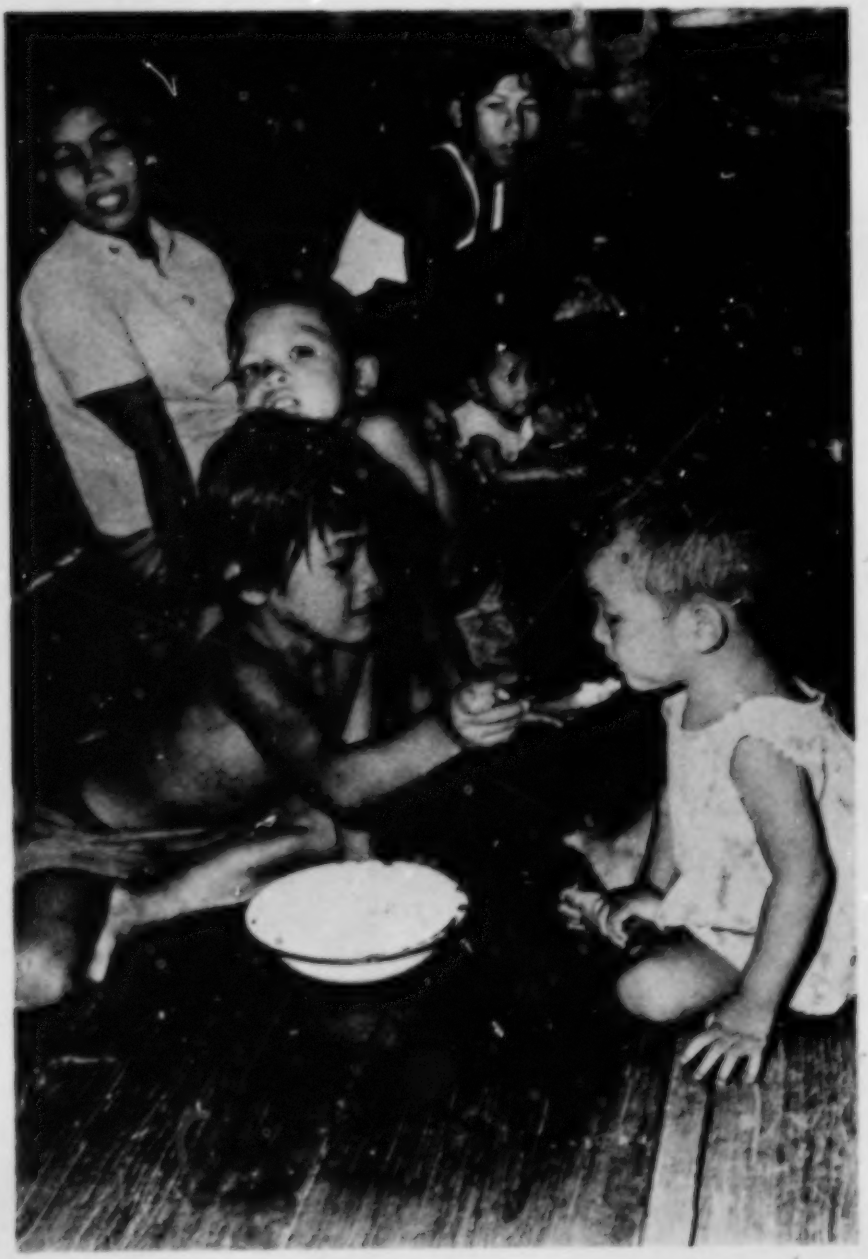
school practices are subject-centred and do not cater to the total personality development of the child. They are purveyed in abstractly organized sequences and fail to take account of, or respond to, the multiple and diversified learning needs of young learners drawn from a variety of environments and experiential backgrounds. For example, the learning experience which a child brings to school, if he comes from a home with books and toys, fits into the sequentially organized school programme, but equally valid learning experiences which another child has gained tending the family cattle, or participating in family or neighbourhood work activities, usually have no place in the school programme. This child is a stranger, an outsider in the schooling system.

3. The school structure is rigidly organized by levels, by grades, by time-spans, by predetermined learning steps. Each level or grade, however, acquires meaning or use only when continued into the next higher level and grade; each level is but a stepping stone to a higher level and not an adequate preparation for life, except for the 'life' of the classroom. Entry into the system is at only one point, the lowest; and those who leave midway may have no re-entries. Designed to be exclusive, the system in its present form cannot cater to the needs of those who do not fit into its rigid mould. Further, it is divisive in practice and may give rise to psychological problems in the children.

4. The schooling system in its present form is not only exclusive, but it is also isolative. It functions by isolating itself from the community in which it is placed. There is a deep divide between the life of the learners outside the school and what they encounter in the classroom. The 'successful' learner in this system achieves that success by isolating himself from life, and the longer he is in the system, the less able he is to connect with his environment.

5. The schooling system is relatively expensive, and with inadequate resources, countries are facing great difficulty in keeping up with the assumed linear expansion of the Karachi Plan era.

6. Large numbers of educated unemployed have not only provided academic proof of the limited relevance of much of the



present formal schooling system to the realities of the countries, but have also contributed to political instability. This reflects low external efficiency of the system.

7. The high rate of educational wastage in terms of repetition, absenteeism and drop-outs from the system indicates that the internal efficiency too is poor.

Nevertheless, the schooling system remains the major organized delivery system in Asian countries which is recognized and accepted by the populace and the Governments. It has the potential of reaching remote areas and disadvantaged population. It is also the most experienced institutional system for the delivery of formalized and organized instruction under the control and supervision of a well-defined administrative structure.

Member States have already recognized the validity of some of the criticisms in the formal education system listed above and several of them have introduced corrective actions to overcome the limitations and deficiencies.

Basic considerations

Functional programmes for disadvantaged populations cannot materialize in a substantial manner unless national priorities, policies and political will are unambiguously focussed on equity and social justice, and national directives actually reach decentralized levels. Since these programmes have of necessity to be locally specific and decentralized, it is necessary to obtain a harmonizing simultaneously of local and national priorities.

The target population, even when dealing specifically with disadvantaged groups in rural and urban situations, consists of a variety of sub-populations, both in and out of school. Confining attention to the sub-set of young learners, in the age-group of up to about 15-16 years, in disadvantaged areas, the sub-populations of particular importance in school are: (1) primary-school-age children with learning difficulties, some of which stem from the deprived educational, social, cultural, emotional and economic environments of disadvantaged populations; (2) the average learners, and (3) learners with special abilities. For the out-of-school populations, the following are of special importance:

(1) pre-school-age children; (2) early primary-school leavers; (3) primary-school-age children who have never had the opportunity of attending school; (4) primary-school graduates who do not proceed to higher levels of education; (5) early secondary-school leavers; (6) children and youth of secondary school age who have never had the opportunity of attending school.

The parents of the children form an important target population too, in that they provide the essential supportive educational environment in the home.

The search for alternatives needs to consider the specific attributes and entry behaviours of these sub-populations, including the competencies they possess, their aspirations, their learning styles and their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

The focus of attention on education for disadvantaged populations needs to reflect a global view of education, as it should be for all learners, disadvantaged or not. Education does not equal schooling. The school does not have a monopoly on education. Any development of knowledge, skills and attitudes is education. In addition to the school, a variety of agencies may be utilized for learning, such as the family, the employer, peer groups, the community, church, temple and mosque.

The learning must take into account the social, cultural, economic milieu of the learners. However, there is a grave danger that learners in disadvantaged situations will be fossilized into a stagnant, poverty-ridden condition with a capacity merely to survive in such deprived situations. 'Ladders' and 'bridges' out of the poverty situations are essential, and would include the introduction of new wholesome needs derived from national socio-economic development priorities. Furthermore, equity and the egalitarian principle would demand that all learners possess a set of national 'basics', with locally specific variants added, to provide for a necessary and sufficient quantum of learning.

Developing strategies

The wider interpretation of education with the addition of the significant dimension of relevance and the association of work and learning, implies that not all of these responsibilities can be

executed by the school system. A variety of agencies capable of providing such educational inputs has to be mobilized. This generally involves a co-ordinating mechanism that has the authority to bring together and rationalize the inputs of the various agencies in the approximate quantity and quality, in the required magnitude, and at the optimum time.

Local specificity and decentralized action in the delivery of education to disadvantaged populations require not only the utilization of local resources which have hitherto gone untapped, but also the endowment of such deprived situations with resources capable of being exploited for educational purposes. This means a conscious enhancement of the local ecology in a variety of ways, including the establishment of usable, instantly sensitive knowledge flow systems and improvement of existing infrastructures that may be utilized for education.

The relationship of complementarity however cannot be assumed or realized between the schooling system as it functions at present with its distorting social role, and the special programmes for young people whose learning deprivation is to a significant degree a negative effect of the conventional schooling system itself. Therefore any strategy aimed at meeting the learning needs of the deprived young people must have, as an indispensable element, the transformation of the schooling system itself. The programmes for deprived young people can in themselves contribute significantly to such transformation, through adding new dimensions to the social objectives, learning content and delivery methods of the school system.

Another question that the programme designers have to decide relates to the consideration of whether the programme for deprived young people should be introduced on an extensive scale or in graduated steps through pilot experiments and demonstration projects, adopting a selective approach. Almost all of the current programmes in the developing countries of Asia are in the form of projects covering limited areas and specific populations. In a very few countries, however, it is proposed to introduce programmes on an extensive scale, covering a significant part of the country in the very first phase.

A variety of factors must be taken into account in deciding the strategy for initiating a programme, notably the essential nature of the programme and the unique conditions which the implementation of the programme may call for. For example, the essential nature of a programme designed specifically to meet the learning needs of deprived young people may lie in the fact that it must be built on the learning experiences and environment of the 'client' group. The programme would therefore need to be developed (and not just implemented) locally, by community or by eco-system areas; it would necessarily be highly diversified and not uniform. The unique conditions for its implementation would call for a concurrent transformation of the schooling system and also an intense mobilization of the local communities which would be crucial to the effectiveness of the programme. Among other factors important to the programme would include the availability of institutional structures on which the programme may draw for its research, development and training needs.

Experience suggests that where mobilization of community support and resources is needed in a programme, it is more likely to be realized by an extensive programme which covers a number of communities rather than by isolated, small-scale projects. The scale of operation is essential for evoking wide-based participation. On the other hand, the programme for deprived youth is by nature innovative in content and methods, and would have, in most countries, little experience as a precedent to guide it. Such testing experience can best be created in experimental programmes, which may then be used as training ground for further expansion. The pre-requisites for such experimental programmes should however be carefully determined and the limitations of the pilot-project-approach guarded against. Among the pre-requisites would be included considerations such as the following:

- In view of the large diversity of conditions in which programmes for deprived youth must operate, more than one experimental programme may be minimally necessary to 'sample' such diversity and generate experiences of different modes of operation.

- The coverage of each experimental programme should be adequate to ensure that it would be feasible to make responsive changes in the schooling system, particularly at the primary level, in the experimental area, and that the community participation and the support of other appropriate institutions would be mobilized.

- The experimental programmes themselves should be what the extensive programme is intended to be; namely, self-reliant, relying on what their own human resources can generate; and endogenous, that is, authentic to the local needs and situations and utilizing their own productive capacities.

The nature of the programmes, the dynamic situations catered to, the variations in local conditions, the relative inadequacy of the 'state of the art', among others, make evaluation, feedback and quick corrective action imperative in any attempt to deliver education to disadvantaged populations. In fact continuous evaluation would necessarily be an integral component of such programmes, with corrective action taken as close to the front line as conditions permit.

Organization of content

The growing literature on such topics as alternative education, non-formal education or basic minimum learning needs already contains a variety of suggestions on the content and methods of programmes for deprivec youth.

One approach exemplified in 'basic education' is a package of the 'minimum' that every child should be able to acquire in a shortened cycle of primary education. The formulation runs "literacy, numeracy, adequate verbal expression, some knowledge of citizenship, of physical and social environment, of health and nutrition".

This approach is often indistinguishable from the conventional schooling system except for the attempt to lighten the content. If the schooling system in its present form has failed to respond to the learning needs of the deprived youth for profoundly social and psychological reasons, 'basic education' cast

in the same mould but with a thinner mixture, is even less likely to meet these needs. Indeed the approach is a non-alternative so far as the deprived youth are concerned, and is likely to reinforce existing dual-education systems - one for the advantaged and another for the disadvantaged.

Another approach which goes much deeper into the problem seeks to identify, by intellectual analysis, the competencies that the young learners should be enabled to acquire in order to set them on the path of continuing individual and social development. These competencies include critical thinking; communication; numeration; ethical and aesthetic appreciation; healthful living, family and household living; earning a living and work habits; and civic participation. The areas of competencies are then resolved in terms of learning experiences which are provided to the young learners by a number of agencies in situations which need not be space-bound in the way the schooling system is.

This approach has much in common with the style of curriculum development in the schooling system, while diverging from it in some significant features. The 'competencies' that are identified are exactly those that any schooling system aspires to achieve, and underlying the act of schematizing the competencies are undeclared beliefs about the kind of learning experiences which will achieve the competencies when properly sequenced and packaged. The important divergence lies in the insight that the competencies cannot be achieved by the schooling system alone. Other social institutions such as the family, the community, the communal cultural heritage and places of work, recreation or activity have a significant contribution to make.

Another approach takes as its starting point the experiences of the learners. The conventional schooling system assumes that the learner is tabula rasa, on which pre-selected learning experiences are to be imprinted by progressive gradation and sequencing in order to achieve pre-determined behavioural changes or competencies at different moments in time. The other approach to learning content bases itself on the experiences that the learners acquire in the process of growing up, and the interactions in the social, cultural and physical environments which form some of the principal sources of the learner's

experiences. The task of education is to build on these experiences and make them formative experiences, a process in which the learner's free and investigatory activity is singly the most important element.

The stock of the learner's experience at any age is derived directly from life, from action on the environment, and from interaction with other human beings. The transmutation of the learner's experience into formative experiences is a double-pronged process. It involves a deepening of the learner's consciousness of his felt and acquired experiences, to searching for new experiences and to the capacity to apply the experiences to new situations - to invent.

Secondly, all of this implies, and indeed makes it mandatory, that formative and post-formative experiences should be a continuum of learner experiences. The former should not be isolated from the latter. Thus, work cannot be separated from learning because it is inseparably imbedded in the learner experiences. The experiences of young people in tending their cattle or taking care of babies at home, or participating in family or community activities on the farm or the fish pond, are not only likely to be more meaningful to the learners, but also at least as valid for transmitting them into formative and post-formative experiences as the contrived experiences in the classroom. In this view of learning content, skills such as literacy or numeracy are not norms by which learning is measured, but episodes in the process of deepening the learner's consciousness. The desire to acquire these skills is a manifestation of this process and is also generated by it.

The learning content, in this other approach, can only be developed from where the learners are, in their specific milieu and environment, and with their participation. The role of the teacher (facilitator of learning), is to identify the learning resources - in the learner experiences, in the social inter-relationships, in the work places, in the cultural life and in the physical environment. Learning takes place in combination with production and social activities, and teaching becomes a broad co-operative effort of the whole community in which the teacher has the partnership of other community agents.

The teaching-learning methods implied in this other approach are first and foremost those which involve the learners actively in the act of learning through investigation, enquiry and 'doing'. At all stages learning and doing go together. Moreover, learning should become a co-operative activity among the learners themselves. Learning is not only an individual attainment.

The educational programmes designed for deprived youth along the lines indicated in this other approach would also provide the base for transforming the schooling system, particularly at the primary level, so that the schooling system ceases to be a rejecting system.

The two last approaches may be bridged by first deriving the basic tasks a learner would need to perform, based on criteria flowing from the socio-economic and cultural ecology, including developmental tasks demanded by the learner's environment, and his aspirations, as well as from national aspirations for the present and the future. The basic tasks may then be analyzed into corresponding competencies to perform the tasks, which will next provide directives for educational needs, which in turn will provide frameworks for educational inputs in terms of the appropriate elements in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning.

Some of the techniques from the current methods of curriculum development, as for the specification of objectives, content analysis, sequencing, reinforcement, test-items construction, may be found useful. But quite different techniques would have to be evolved when the emphasis is shifted radically away from 'discipline' content to real-life situations implicit in integrated socio-economic development programmes and in national ideologies, and to the emphases on relevance and learning both for and in life. All of these would require human resources development of the various participants of the exercise, particularly at the decentralized levels, in skills which would necessarily be different from those of the curriculum developers working within the existing school systems.

Even at the level of analysis, it is clear that there are intersecting sets of learning objectives which arise from different

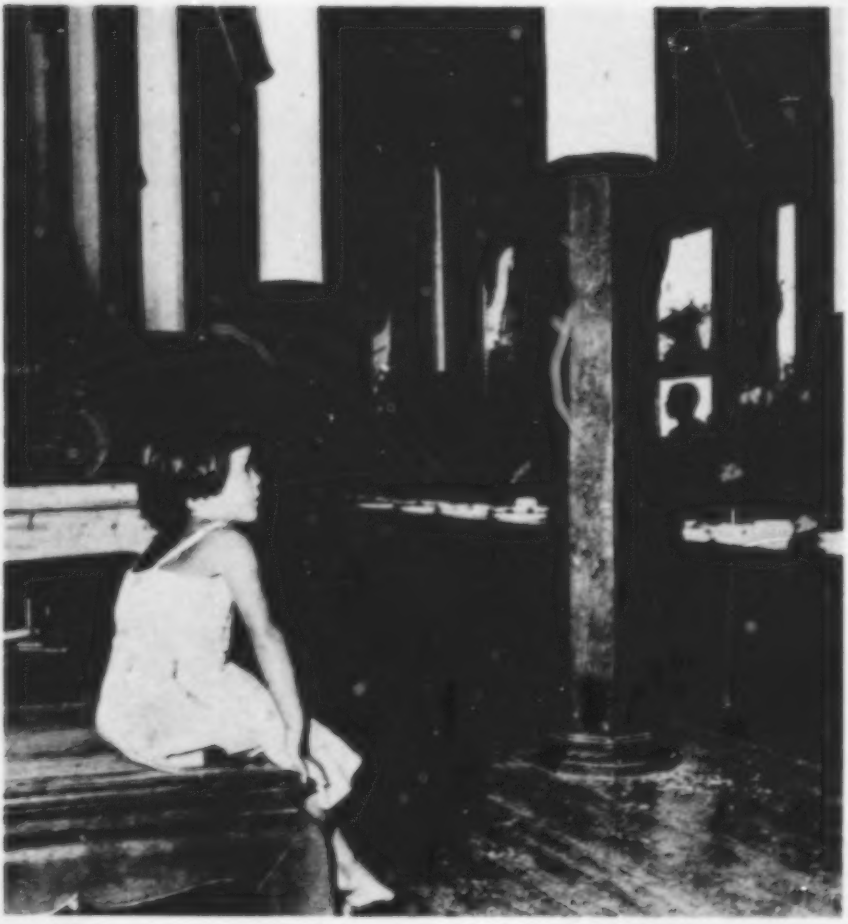
sources, critical to life and work. These sets grow from the home and family, home organizational and occupational living, and from national development tasks. The individual elements that can be included in them are likely to be different from one national context to another, or even from one sub-national level to another. These elements are also most likely to vary significantly with time, even for a given micro-situation. Curriculum development mechanisms have to be geared to and be responsive to such changes, implying that the act of curriculum development would have to be decentralized as far into remote regions as possible, which in turn implies the generation of expertise at these decentralized levels for undertaking such development and for the renewal of existing curricula.

Conscious utilization of learning for and in life implies that learning and action cannot be separated. Learning cannot remain inert for the learners. A dialectical and practical relationship has to be established between theory and practice. Learning is best when linked very closely to productive applications in real life, such as to real work. The selection of this 'work' raises very serious practical problems over and above those regarding the matching of the nature of the work to the level of maturity and development of the learners, particularly of the primary age group. Should the 'work' fit the learner for survival in that environment alone? Should the learner acquire competencies beyond survival? What new occupations appear in the horizon? What are the dying occupations? What adaptabilities and skill transfer are possible between 'survival work' and work beyond survival, and towards new transformations? How is the transformation between what is relevant to the individual, to the micro-environment, and to the nation's broader aspirations done? How are national standards, accreditation, wage equivalents, modifications to the incentive systems established?

The location of the 'education' in 'work' has another set of problems, which to a large extent have not found adequate solutions as yet. Some countries in Asia have experimented with the resolution of the 'work' into its unit and sub-unit operations, and further resolved each sub-unit operation with the relevant cognitive, affective and psychomotor components. This technique

would permit potential learning sequences to retain the rhythm of the operations in the work, rather than the 'logical' sequence of a discipline structure. However, much of the current curriculum development, focused upon discipline content, rests on the need to analyze discipline content into its separate, significant and internally consistent hierarchy of concepts and principles. This hierarchy often does not coincide with the hierarchy of content requirements of the rhythm of work. Comprehension of the knowledge components, for example, in sub-unit operations in a particular work may require pre-knowledge, which may need to be available to the learner even prior to participating in the learning episode related to the work. The levels of cognitive operation could vary enormously within each content package. The analysis of relevant life/work situations to isolate the content available in them has several problems in itself. These real-life situations are usually highly complex and integrated, with several discipline content areas interacting simultaneously. Essential curriculum development activities such as these will not be possible without other knowledgeable multi-disciplinary personnel not normally considered as working in the education field.

Problem solving as a methodology in education has come to be accepted generally as an essential pedagogical technique. It is assumed to provide for critical thinking, self-reliance, and independence. While problem solving has been a slogan in curriculum development for several decades, the problems selected for solution are almost invariably contrived academic ones. They rarely touch problems of real life, and even less do they include fundamental social issues connected with poverty and deprivation, with development and change. If problem solving is to mean the solving of problems bearing directly on individual and community life, then social issues have to be brought out into the open boldly, and correspondingly, the learning episodes will have to face up to these problems directly. Learning objectives for problem solving, learning sequences applying problem solving, with a specific focus on the eradication of poverty, must face up to the realities of political framework, constraints, and indeed stimulations as well, if relevant basic learning needs are really to be met for disadvantaged or deprived populations.



Negative psychological effects on people due to long-term poverty are only now being recognized. The poor tend to herd themselves into sub-cultures of despair in which 'trying' has been given up, in which the possibility of achieving power over their destiny is unthinkable. Despair transmits itself to the young, reinforcing the sense of defeat. In homes with a long history of poverty, an atmosphere is created that discourages the interrogative use of the mind. These psychological manifestations are easily provided reinforcement by a variety of external factors. Thus the 'poverty syndrome' is produced not by economic deprivation alone, but by a pattern of social relations. Being poor means being powerless, being treated as inferior, in a variety of ways, subtle, and not so subtle, throughout life.

Hence, of special interest are those particular combinations of competencies which will provide the poor with the capacity to achieve a measure of control over their destiny and their vulnerability, enabling them to enhance their sense of dignity. The curriculum developer must ask what content, what methodologies, what learning episodes, will generate such competencies for 'empowering' the learners.

In a related direction, the dynamic forces of change and modernization impinging on all sectors of society have severe implications for learning, particularly in disadvantaged areas. The development of curricula for the future has to reckon on producing learners capable of not only adapting to, but also managing the sociological and other implications of development.

When the analysis, location and articulation of learning objectives have been completed, these would next need to be resolved to indicate which sub-set would be maximally available from which of the varieties of agencies that may be utilized for learning, such as the home and family, formal school or the extended community, including special agencies in the curriculum, such as extension services or mass media. This operation, already entering formal schooling as 'work experiences' or 'work education' also provides functional and practical opportunities for manifesting life-long education as an organizing principle, and for breaking the hermatically sealed separation - preparation for life and work, followed by the utilization of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes for working and living.

If participants in the learning are themselves to be involved in the identification or location of learning objectives, and in determining which agencies may best be used, further new techniques and methodologies, new to traditional curriculum development, would be needed, such as for eliciting and recording perceptions of learners.

Development of methods

Signals for methods of development and adaptation of content are implicit in the above analysis. In the area of pedagogical methods several major issues are visible when educational inputs and alternatives to school education at primary level are considered for disadvantaged populations.

A pedagogical strategy which is very significant is learning as compared with traditional teaching. This implies major changes in the role of the teacher from merely 'telling' to being a facilitator of learning. The learners occupied in the task of learning, rather than being taught, would utilize a variety of learning methods, such as learner's participation in the learning process, including the identification of learning content; learning from peers; inter-learning; dialogues; self-learning. Special design problems which do not arise when curriculum development is for generalized populations of assumed homogeneity have to be faced when account must be taken of the variety of ages, experiential background, view of life, motivations, time available for learning or learning styles of the learners.

The implications of relevance and learning for and in life apply just as much to the formal system as they do to alternatives for out-of-school pupils.

For the portion of the target population in disadvantaged areas in school, it is known that adverse socio-economic status has a strong negative influence on pupil achievement. Short vocabulary and language spans, paucity of concept formation and verbal experience, and the absence of interrogative approaches are some of the disabilities that have contributed to poor achievement, and which stem from a deprived educational environment in the home of the learner. There is no doubt that a variety of compensatory and remedial measures involving new pedagogical

methods are essential for socially disadvantaged learners in the formal school, if they are to be provided a reasonable chance to compete with the advantaged. Pre-school-age children, for similar reasons of socio-economic deprivation, need special remedial measures to compensate for their upbringing in disadvantaged educational environments 'n the home.

For both in- and out-of-school populations, an absolutely essential target population is that which supports the child population: the parents, the extended family and the community. The education of these informal educational agents of the child is an essential and integral component in the alternative approaches to the delivery of education to disadvantaged populations, and the delivery of this education involves again a set of new methods.

To avoid having a dual education system - one for the advantaged and one for the disadvantaged - requires a number of flexible 'bridges' and 'ladders' from the out-of-school to the in-school situation and vice versa, as well as multiple entry points in the formal system. From a methodological standpoint, this implies a variety of compensatory, remedial and accelerated educational programmes to make it possible for learners to cross the bridge or climb the ladder, and new and relevant evaluation techniques.

For the gifted disadvantaged learner in school too, such bridges and ladders to reach beyond his environment require methods which are at present insufficiently present in formal education systems.

At a more general level, it is clear that new methods in the design and execution of alternative educational delivery mechanisms are required, such as those related to planning; communication of plans to implementors at all levels; the diffusion of plans, in particular project support communication ; supervision; action research; evaluation; feedback; and plan reformulation. Correspondingly, new methods would be called for in the training of the various personnel responsible for each of the above operations.

It should be noted that many of the above pedagogical and other techniques and methods have begun to be introduced into the 'formal' system itself, as it moves towards greater relevance and increased deformalization to meet new learning objectives implicit in recent educational reforms.

To support these learning efforts, particularly self-learning in a disadvantaged environment, numerous institutional and non-institutional (governmental and non-governmental) resources would need to be exploited, and this in turn would involve changes in the roles, profiles, images, and activities of current institutions, communities, groups, and individuals. Networks reaching the furthest decentralized levels for the development, deployment, and supply of a variety of resource materials, using a variety of media, would also become essential. A flexible, sensitive, adaptive multi-component system of knowledge flow, linking a variety of institutional and non-institutional knowledge centres at

various geographical levels in the country and reaching remote areas, would need to be established to support both the learners and the facilitators of learning.

By far the most critically important component in any programme of human resources development, with self-reliance as a method of action and also as its goal, is the human element. Hence the importance of the facilitators of learning and their preparation and training.

A programme for the learning needs of deprived youth may be said to have three principal elements: organizing the population groups for learning; identifying, activating and creating learning environments and facilitators of learning; and providing support and materials for continuing learning and for the application of learning.

Some of the insights and capacities required of the facilitator of learning are undoubtedly provided in the preparation of the formal school teacher;[4] for example, the skills of communication. There is, however, much more that the general run of teacher training neglects or ignores. This would include sensitive understanding of a community milieu; skills in identifying individual learning styles; community and group organization and action; and skills in developing instructional materials using local resources.

In regard to the methodology of training, two issues call for special attention. First, is the institutionalized training of the type used for the preparation of teachers suitable for those who are to work with deprived youth? It is pointed out that existing teacher training isolates the trainees for a long period of time from the actual conditions in which they will have to work on completion of their training. No wonder, then, that teachers find themselves ill-prepared to work in rural areas. Second, the issue should be explored as to how far it is feasible that facilitators of learning should be drawn from the areas where the programme is to operate, and preferably from the population groups being served by the programme.

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4. Formal school teachers are increasingly expected to perform functions as facilitators of learning, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

Adaptation of management

It has been repeatedly emphasized that any systematic development effort directed to deprived populations, including youth, can only proceed from a national policy regarding poverty and deprivation. It is only within such a framework of an overall socio-economic development policy that policy alternatives in education generally, and in the education of deprived youth in particular, can be meaningfully designed. In the absence of a national policy, programmes for deprived youth which may arise from the pioneering zeal of individuals and philanthropic organizations are necessarily piecemeal and isolated. Although they have little impact on the larger problems of human resources development, they may fitfully light up a small corner in an otherwise dim landscape.

Fortunately, in both the developing and developed countries, there are now strong emerging concerns about problems of poverty, deprivation and social inequalities, and their blighting effect on human development. Recognition is also gaining ground that it is not the absolute scarcity of resources which explains poverty in the developing countries; rather the explanation lies in the distribution of the resources. Maldistribution also splits populations into those who consume without producing, and those who produce without sharing in what they produce.

Assuming, therefore, a national concern about deprived youth, the following paragraphs identify two of the major issues and problems of management involved in developing and implementing alternative programmes, as well as other issues.

a) Centralized policy-making and decentralized development

The different approaches to meeting the learning needs of deprived youth which were discussed in an earlier section have one proposition in common: that to be meaningful the programmes must be locally-based and locally engendered. Consequently, diversity and not uniformity will be their characteristic attribute. Before a programme is initiated in an area, the learning needs of the deprived youth in that area would have to be studied in their own specific context, the resources available in the community would be identified, close linkages would have to be established

with other development agencies in the community, and corresponding changes (if any) in the schooling system in that area would have to be articulated. All of this would only lay the groundwork for development. Actual development would be with the learners in the day-to-day operations and in a continuing unfolding process.

Locally-based, locally-developed and locally-guided programme operation is more than 'decentralization'. The initiative and the capacity for such development have to be activated, installed and nurtured at the local level.

At the other hand is the role of the central authority charged with overall policy making, allocation of resources and co-ordination. For any development programme that is locally-based and locally-engendered, co-ordination among the different sectors of national administration is vitally important and must be achieved at all levels, from the central authority down to the local community level.

The problems of central authority-ground-level programme relationships are however by no means resolved by identification of the functions which pertain to one or the other. The programme designer, particularly at the central level, has also to be sensitive to the hidden 'pulls and pushes' which any organization invested with directive authority seems to emanate by the very fact of its existence. For example, a large organization has an inherent tendency to 'uniformize' or 'homogenize', it finds it easier to deal in uniform units which can be described by categories. This tendency would obviously be in conflict with the programmes which, by their nature, cannot but be diverse and individually unique. It must be admitted on available evidence that much of foreign assistance also tends towards uniformity and centralization.

Again, policy-making and allocation of resources imply the determination of priorities. If, however, a priority is specified in detail, and has the effect of setting a uniform standard, it may well have a distorting effect on a programme at the grassroots. For example, a programme for deprived youth will have to draw upon an infinite variety of learner motivations which may include cultural, social, religious or occupational dimensions.

If the priority spells out, say, 'occupational training' as the goal, the nature of the programme and its individual uniqueness are likely to be changed, even distorted. There are similar side-effects of well-intentioned functions such as evaluation.

Recognizing these problems, many countries in Asia have, in very recent years, moved towards greater decentralization of the planning and management machinery, by establishing 'regional' (i.e., sectional) planning mechanisms. These sub-national regional organizations are designed as bridges between national policy and resources on the one hand, and local community problems and needs on the other.

b) Resources

The main thesis suggested in the preceding sections is that the learning needs of deprived youths can be met by locally-based and locally-engendered programmes. This applies equally to young people in school, and hence the stress on a corresponding transformation of the schooling system. This emphasis arises directly from a consideration of the nature of the needs, and not from a hypothesis that the overall costs of education can be decreased by a no-cost formula applicable to those who are out of school. There are, without doubt, budgetary and monetary costs involved, but their justification would be in the degree to which this investment contributes to making maximum use of existing resources, and to bringing to productive use existing unutilized and underutilized resources. Much of the resources problem in education can be attributed to misallocation of resources largely induced by the 'demonstration effect' of cost-intensive models of industrialized countries, rather than an absolute scarcity of resources in relation to the development needs. A reorientation of educational policy to mass education and to the deprived population groups would therefore imply necessarily a re-examination of resources allocation priorities in the national context.

The real resources in any programme of mass education in the developing countries are the people. The mobilization of their contribution and capacities must be a prior and continuing concern in developing national policy. The community efforts would need to be supported by (i) inputs by the governments; (ii) use of the resources of the schools (premises, part-time services of

teachers, equipment, etc.); (iii) contributions of voluntary educators and other people - administrators, technicians, village craftsmen, skilled and semi-skilled workers, and local agencies such as farm enterprises, co-operatives and religious organizations; (iv) financing from the production enterprises in the community.

c) Other management issues

Management issues arise, in the alternative delivery of educational inputs, with emphasis on disadvantaged populations in such aspects as the following: co-ordination among the various agencies (governmental and non-governmental) at various levels, and in particular at the decentralized levels; maximum utilization of local resources, both public and private; opportunities for local participation and decision making; diffusion and project support communication; mechanisms for sustained action including appropriate incentive systems for implementors and implementing agencies; training implementors (such as teachers, facilitators of learning, administrators and planners, resource and knowledge flow systems and signal systems for knowledge requests from the client population; and management implication of the decentralized planning and other unit operations in the delivery of educational inputs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

The Seminar is convinced that alternative approaches to meeting the learning needs of young people, in school or out of school, cannot be developed by making marginal changes in the existing structures and content of primary education programmes. This is particularly so where the learning needs of deprived populations are concerned. The development of viable alternatives and a simultaneous reorientation of the existing systems call for systematic experimentation, with new techniques, methodologies and materials. Inter-country and regional co-operation in this area would be a particularly productive ground for international action.

With the above considerations in mind and recognizing the co-operative interest of international agencies, notably Unicef and Unesco, the Seminar recommends the following areas for action and assistance at the national and regional levels.

National level

1. Action-research, studies and projects on the development and adaptation of learning content in the delivery of education to deprived populations including:

   - Identification and analysis of learning content for mass education (national basics and local variants), and supportive parental instruction;
   - Utilization of learner experiences as formative learning content and development of consistent, relevant post-formative learning content;
   - Making learning content implicit in socio-economic development programmes and specifically programmes for the removal of poverty.

2. Action-research, studies and projects on the development and adaptation of methodologies in the delivery of education to deprived populations, including:

- Pedagogical methodologies; in particular those incorporating the attributes of the various and diverse learners, such as socio-economic-cultural aspects, learning styles, motivations, availability of time, educational deprivation;

- Delivery and infrastructive methodologies; in particular, training methodologies for various implementors and changes in methodologies for formal school teachers to provide them with competencies to meet new social-action-based educational needs; methods for using under-utilized and unutilized indigenous learning techniques, institutions (especially the school in its new roles), and people, for the delivery of education to deprived populations; decentralized resource and learning centres;

- Planning and management methodologies, including those for decentralized planning and management, communication, diffusion, implementation, supervision, evaluation, feedback and plan reformulation and, in particular, incentive systems for facilitators of learning; inter-sectoral co-ordination; community participation in decision making; removal of barriers to poverty strategies;

- Knowledge and information dissemination methodologies, including national coverage (and regional and international transmission of information on projects) for the delivery of education to deprived populations, through networks of national change-agent groups at various levels, which would also take on advocacy roles in the country.

Regional and international level

1. Financial and technical assistance support, at the request of Member States, for country actions for the delivery of education to deprived populations, without producing distorting effects on indigenous development;

2. Support for providing access to significant educational experiences in the delivery of education to deprived populations in other countries through documentation flow and clearing house services; case study analyses; and study/exchange visits by country project personnel for on-the-job training at on-going projects;

3. Support (in co-operation with Member States) for the utilization of selected national centres and projects for the periodic training of personnel from other countries;

4. Support to Member States, as required for translation into English, of representative samples of learning/teaching materials (originally in the national languages) successfully developed and used by the Member States, which may be shared with other countries; the development and dissemination of multi-media packages (films, charts, slides, tapes, VTR and printed matter) depicting country experiences, which may be shared with other countries;

5. Support for periodic field-operational seminars and experts' meetings to analyze and synthesize experiences in the delivery of education to deprived populations;

6. Support for regional and international surveys and analyses, with the co-operation of Member States, of the follow-up of the recommendations for the delivery of education to deprived populations;

7. Support for periodic meetings of high-level decision makers, to provide a forum for discussions on policy matters related to the delivery of education to deprived populations, and monitor progress in the Asian region.

ANNEX I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Review of national experiences in developing alternative approaches to school education at primary level (for various learner groups: non-school-enrolled children and young people; enrolled children and young people; children and youth without adequate schooling).
3. In the light of item 2, consideration of the main principles and concepts underlying the search for alternatives:
   a) Development of strategies to meet learning needs of various groups in the young population.
   b) Organization and adaptation of content and methods.
   c) Organization and adaptation of teaching/learning resources.
   d) Problems of management and administration in designing alternative approaches.
4. Suggestions for future action at country, regional and international levels: research, planning, implementation, evaluation, inter-country collaboration.
5. Adoption of Report.

ANNEX II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

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Minister Pedro F. Abella
Executive Secretary

Dr. Alfredo T. Morales
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(Director, NRDCTE, DEC)

ANNEX III

Address by the Honorable Juan L. Manuel
Secretary of Education and Culture
Republic of the Philippines

I am immensely pleased to welcome you to Metro Manila, and I wish that your brief stay here will be both extremely edifying and enjoyable.

Most of you have travelled far to attend this Unesco Regional Seminar on Alternative Approaches to School Education at the Primary Level. I hope that you have seen some of the lovely sights in Metro Manila on your way here to assuage your travel weariness and to start you off on this seminar auspiciously. I also hope that you will find time and the opportunity to discover more of the many delectable sights and sounds which make tourists' stay in our country a truly delightful and unforgettable experience. El Grande is beautiful, but I'd like you to know that beyond it are a number of other breath-taking scenes and interesting places. Don't leave Metro Manila without discovering and savouring them.

About a score of years ago, it was possible to predict with reasonable accuracy what education would be like a decade after by looking closely at the contemporary curriculum and classrooms. Action for change was then focused primarily on improving and expanding what already existed; in other words, action was directed to achieving more of the same. Today, however, the educational scene has virtually become a kaleidoscope that changes as rapidly as the forces impinging on it, so that no one can predict with accuracy what education would be like in the late 1980s.

Education changes so rapidly that someone remarked that to report on it today is like taking a picture of a moving object; by the time the shutter has clicked, the picture has changed.

Potent forces both in and out of education have compelled those of us in the field to resort to innovation and renovation to assure that as our young charges improve in the ability to read, write and compute, they may be better integrated into their environment, have a better grasp of real life, their personal dignity enhance, have access to sources of knowledge which they may find personally useful. Moreover, they may have acquired the know-how and techniques which they need in order to lead a better life.

Changes in demographic structure which have increasingly made education budgets disproportionate to the constantly swelling school populations and the observation that education suffers basically from the chasm between content and the experience of its clientele, and between the constellation of values it inculcates and societal goals, have impelled the introduction of innovations designed to deliver economical yet effective mass primary education in Asia.

Problems and solutions

In the Philippines we are in an era of accelerating change in primary education. We are developing and moving toward newer educational activities prompted by our desire to solve persistent problems and based on the increased knowledge of technocracy that has developed in recent years. It can be said that we have entered a new phase of education that is attempting to solve jaded problems with fresh approaches. We have developed a number of alternatives for primary education which are either innovations or renovations that served as a consequence of the determination to solve recurring problems that have plagued this level.

One of the recurring problems every school year for several decades has been the severe lack of classrooms on account of the inability of the government to keep up with the yearly school population increments. In 1972 the problem became so acute that it was necessary to adopt a fresh alternative for maximizing the utilization of existing classrooms and facilities.

The two-shift or 50-50 plan was adopted in many schools. The plan required the restructuring of the daily class programme such that all purely academic subjects were grouped for one session, for instance in the morning, and those that entailed physical activities, such as physical education, work education, scouting, civic action work, art and music were grouped for another session, say in the afternoon or vice-versa. The idea was to release some rooms for academic use by holding the activity sessions outdoors. This scheme doubles the usability of existing classrooms.

Besides helping to solve the classroom shortage, the two-shift plan has improved the outcomes of primary education by providing larger blocks of time for teaching the different subject areas. Since purely academic subjects are taught during either the morning or afternoon session, programming for each subject may be in larger blocks of time, thereby enhancing effectiveness in learning.

Before the adoption of the two-shift plan, we temporarily solved the classroom crisis by adopting the double-single session plan, which required that one class use a classroom in the morning and another class, in the afternoon. The class programme had to be adjusted so that two classes could be accommodated in one room during the day.

At present we spend approximately 88% of the education budget for teachers' salaries, and it is inadvisable at this stage to spend more of it for the purpose. This has led us to develop and try out an alternative which not only increases the number of pupils to be handled by one teacher but would also improve the quality of education since it compels the pupils to be actively involved in their learning. I refer to the In-School Off-School Approach (IS-OSA) which, I am sure, you are by now familiar with because your conference papers have devoted a number of paragraphs to it. Feedback from both the try-out pupils and their parents indicate the viability of the scheme as a potential solution to the recurring shortage of classrooms and teachers in the primary school.

The advent of independent study and self-instructional schemes in the Philippine educational scene has given rise to the

need for learning centres in which books and non-book materials are integrated and made available to learners. Today, while learning centres found in the public schools are still rather crude, in the affluent private schools in Manila there are a number of well-structured and well-stocked learning centres.

Learning centres were first established in schools where the In-School Off-School Approach (IS-OSA) and the Innotech scheme of Instruction Managed by Parents and Community Teachers (IMPACT) are being tried out. These were housed either in a classroom or a structure outside school, such as a room in a private residence. In one school division, there are learning centres housed in the Protestant and Aglipayan churches. When fully developed, learning centres are intended to serve the learning needs of not only the pupils in the formal school system but those in the non-formal system as well.

The learning centres will be linked with the existing network of decentralized resource centres and regional staff development centres which have been established in connection with a massive textbook and staff development project. This network will provide them with materials and extend their services and thus assure that they do not deteriorate from disuse.

Recently a team composed of an educationist, an engineer and architect pursued a project on developing architectural designs for rural and urban learning centres, with the generous assistance of Unesco, Bangkok. It has also drawn up a 19-year plan for the development of learning centres all over the country, which proposes a headstart with pilot learning centres of the rural and urban types in every region. The next decade may yet see the establishment of learning centres which will provide the setting for a variety of alternatives to primary education which will continuously be evolved as the centres are set up.

In the realm of special education at the primary level, one alternative adopted in areas where there is a lack of adequately trained teachers to handle a specific area of exceptionality is the employment of an itinerant teacher. The itinerant teacher draws up a schedule of interventions with her clientele, which fortunately for her are not many, so that she can individualize instruction. She moves from one school where there are exceptional children

to another according to the schedule. During the time she is not with the children, they are integrated with the classes for normal children or coached by some advanced pupils until the time the teacher comes.

Another problem which has impelled us to adopt innovative alternatives is our alarming drop-out rate. Economic, health and a number of other reasons account for the early school leaving of a large number of children in the primary school every year.

Two approaches to this problem of drop-outs: (1) Preventive - Continuous progression; (2) Remedial. While considerable efforts have been exerted to bring them back to school, a big number still remain out of school because they have been constrained to work at daytime.

The second is remedial - In accordance with our policy of democratizing access to educational opportunity, a number of fresh alternatives have been adopted to deliver basic education to these children and youth. For instance, in the Division of Manila, evening classes at the primary level are held, following a reduced-instructional-time scheme, to accommodate drop-outs who cannot afford to go to school at daytime. The learners are taught the basic academic skills, knowledge that will help them improve their quality of life, and the duties of citizenship. For those who work to earn a living, vocational skills are skipped. For those who do not work to earn a living, study is integrated with productive work in an earn-while-you-learn scheme.

A system of accrediting learning gained outside school will be launched next year with the completion of a placement test designed for determining the grade level of a learner prior to his readmission into the formal school system. This system reflects our persuasion that the school is not the sole mediator of learning. There are several elements in the home and community which serve to mediate learning. As the out-of-school youth interacts with them, his intellectual, psychomotor and affective equipment is strengthened and enriched, his horizons broadened, and his capacity for effective participation in the basic social processes enhanced.

Search for better alternatives

The ineffectiveness of old solutions to recurring problems has made innovation and renovation in education necessary. Concurrent revolutions and socio-economic structures, in demographic patterns and in science and technology make them imperative. Educational research and technology, coupled with a vigorous determination to solve persistent problems and a capacity to match resources with aspirations make them possible. Both in and out of the realm of education, there is a rich reservoir of knowledge which may inspire innovations and renovations needed to increase the efficiency of the school system.

There are innovations in other countries as well as in other areas of concern which may provide the basis for viable alternatives to education. In the realm of education itself, new patterns are emerging, rigid structures are becoming more flexible, schools are developing new ways of relating with the school milieu, participative schemes of learning are fast replacing the traditional structures, the concept of the global learning environment which should be evocative in order to facilitate learning is gaining ground, and the principle of active involvement in one's learning is now widely applied. These ideas may serve as springboards for fresh alternatives to primary education.

For as long as society keeps changing, the alternatives that have proven effective today will become anachronistic to the times tomorrow. There will be need for an endless search for better alternatives in a desire to maintain the efficiency of the school system.

It will require methodical study, research, and experimentation, systematic evaluation, and 'anasynthesis' to come up with alternatives better than those adopted today. It will require a great measure of vision, of imagination, of rationality, and intellectual curiosity. It will require no small measure of adventure and courage for, as the philosopher Andre Gide put it, "No man can discover new oceans unless he has the courage to lose sight of the shores."